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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls

Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls

Agreed conclusions

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[1] the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly[2] and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women.[3]

2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[4] and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[5] and the Optional Protocols thereto,[6] as well as other relevant conventions and treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[7] and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[8] provide an international legal

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.
[2] General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.
[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2005/27 and E/2005/27/Corr.1), chap. I, sect. A; ibid., *2010, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2010/27 and E/2010/27/Corr.1), chap. I, sect. A; and ibid., *2015, Supplement No. 7* (E/2015/27), chap. I, sect. C, resolution 59/1.
[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.
[5] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.
[6] Ibid., vol. 2131, No. 20378, and vols. 2171 and 2173, No. 27531, and resolution 66/138, annex.
[7] See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
[8] Ibid.

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framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, throughout their life cycle.

3. The Commission reaffirms that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its reviews, and the outcomes of relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and the follow-up to those conferences and summits, have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[9] and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas.

4. The Commission also reaffirms the commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls made at relevant United Nations summits and conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action[10] and the outcome documents of its reviews. It recognizes that the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,[11] the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,[12] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,[13] and the New Urban Agenda[14] contribute, inter alia, to the improvement of the situation of rural women and girls. The Commission recalls the Paris Agreement,[15] adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.[16]

5. The Commission also recalls the Declaration on the Right to Development[17] and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.[18]

6. The Commission recognizes the importance of relevant International Labour Organization standards related to the realization of women's right to work and rights at work that are critical for the economic empowerment of women, including those in rural areas, and recalls the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization and the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,[19] and notes the importance of their effective implementation, including in rural areas.

7. The Commission acknowledges the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives in their respective regions and countries, and their follow-up mechanisms, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas.

8. The Commission emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas, and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It acknowledges that gender equality and

[9] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

[10] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[11] General Assembly resolution 69/15, annex.

[12] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

[13] General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

[14] General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.

[15] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

[16] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[17] General Assembly resolution 41/128.

[18] General Assembly resolution 71/1.

[19] International Labour Organization, *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*.

the empowerment of rural women and girls and women's full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all.

9. The Commission reaffirms that the promotion and protection of, and respect for, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including the right to development, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, are crucial for women's economic empowerment and should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty and women's economic empowerment, and also reaffirms the need to take measures to ensure that every person is entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, and that equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the promotion, protection and full realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

10. The Commission recognizes that rural women's equal economic rights, economic empowerment and independence are essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It underlines the importance of undertaking legislative and other reforms to realize the equal rights of women and men, as well as girls and boys where applicable, to access economic and productive resources, including land and natural resources, property and inheritance rights, appropriate new and existing technology, financial products and services, including but not limited to microfinance, and women's full and productive employment and decent work, and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities in rural areas.

11. The Commission reiterates that the 2030 Agenda needs to be implemented in a comprehensive manner, reflecting its universal, integrated and indivisible nature, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting each country's policy space and leadership while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and commitments, including by developing cohesive sustainable development strategies to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Commission affirms that Governments have the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels with regard to progress made.

12. The Commission recognizes that progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in particular in rural areas, and the realization of their human rights has been held back owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty, inequalities and disadvantages in access to, ownership of and control over resources, growing gaps in equality of opportunity and limited access to universal health-care services and secondary and post-secondary education, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws and policies, negative social norms and gender stereotypes, and the unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work. It stresses the urgency of eliminating those structural barriers in order to realize gender equality and empower rural women and girls.

13. The Commission acknowledges that all rural women and girls often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization. It respects and values the diversity of situations and conditions of rural women and recognizes that some women face particular barriers to their empowerment. It also stresses that while all women and girls have the same human rights, rural women and girls in different contexts have specific needs and priorities, requiring appropriate responses.

14. The Commission expresses its concern at the fact that 1.6 billion people still live in multidimensional poverty and that nearly 80 per cent of the extreme poor live

in rural areas, and acknowledges that progress in the eradication of poverty has been uneven and that inequality has increased. It expresses concern that poverty is a serious impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and that the feminization of poverty persists. It emphasizes that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It acknowledges the mutually reinforcing links between the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty. It stresses the importance of support for countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

15. The Commission also expresses its concern at the fact that many rural women continue to be discriminated against, marginalized and economically and socially disadvantaged owing to, inter alia, their limited or lack of access to economic resources and opportunities, decent work, social protection, quality education, public health, including health-care services, justice, sustainable and time- and labour-saving infrastructure and technology, land, water and sanitation and other resources, as well as to financial services, credit, extension services and agricultural inputs, as well as at the limited financial inclusion faced by rural women.

16. The Commission recognizes the important role and contribution of rural women as critical agents in the eradication of poverty and in enhancing sustainable agricultural and rural development, as well as sustainable fisheries. It underlines that meaningful progress in those areas necessitates closing the gender gap, introducing appropriate gender-responsive policies, interventions and innovations, including in agriculture and fisheries, and women's equal access to agricultural and fisheries technologies, technical assistance, productive resources, land tenure security and access to, ownership of, and control over land, forests, water and marine resources, and access to and participation in local, regional and international markets.

17. The Commission reaffirms the right to food and recognizes the crucial contributions of rural women to local and national economies and to food production and to achieving food security and improved nutrition, in particular in poor and vulnerable households, and to the well-being of their families and communities, including through work on family farms and women-headed farm enterprises. It expresses deep concern that, although women contribute significantly to food production worldwide, women and girls are disproportionately affected by hunger and food insecurity, in part as a result of gender inequality and discrimination. It recognizes the critical role of women in both short- and long-term responses to food insecurity, malnutrition, excessive price volatility and food crises in developing countries.

18. The Commission stresses the importance of investing in gender-responsive, quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including in rural areas, inter alia, infrastructure for safe drinking water and sanitation, energy, transport, water for irrigation, and technology, including information and communications technology, and other physical infrastructure for accessible public services.

19. The Commission reiterates the importance of safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport and roads in facilitating transport linkages on domestic routes and promoting urban-rural connectivity in order to empower women and girls and boost economic growth at the local and regional levels, promote interconnections among cities and villages, peoples and resources and facilitate intraregional and interregional trade.

20. The Commission reaffirms the right to education and stresses that equal access to high quality and inclusive education contributes to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas.

It notes with concern the lack of progress in closing gender gaps in access to, retention in and completion of secondary and tertiary education and emphasizes the importance of technical and vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities. It recognizes that new technologies are, inter alia, changing the structure of labour markets and that they provide new and different employment opportunities that require skills ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, and in this regard, emphasizes the importance of all rural women and girls having the opportunity to acquire such skills.

21. The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, rural girls are still more likely than rural boys, and girls and boys in urban settings, to remain excluded from education, and recognizes also that among gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour undertaken by girls, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence in and outside of school, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from, and at school, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than that of boys.

22. The Commission reaffirms the right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, without distinction of any kind, and recognizes that its full realization is vital for women's and girls' lives and well-being and for their ability to participate in public and private life, and that it is crucial for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, including in rural areas. It recognizes that targeting and eliminating the root causes of gender inequality, discrimination, stigma and violence in health-care services, including the unequal and limited access to public health services, is important for all women and girls, including those living in rural areas and especially those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations.

23. The Commission emphasizes the need to accelerate progress towards the goal of universal health coverage that comprises universal and equitable access to gender-responsive, quality health services and quality, essential, affordable and effective medicines for all, including for rural women and girls, and that it is critical to promote physical and mental health and well-being, especially through primary health care, health services and social protection mechanisms, including the promotion thereof through community outreach and private sector engagement and with the support of the international community. It stresses the importance of strengthening health systems in terms of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality in order to better respond to the needs of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and enabling the active participation of rural women in the design and implementation of health systems.

24. The Commission expresses its deep concern that, as a result of the lack of or limited access to essential health-care services and information and limited agency over their own lives, rural women experience significant disparities in health, including reproductive health outcomes, such as higher rates of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and obstetric fistula, as well as more limited options for family planning, than women in urban areas. It expresses further concern that those disparities are exacerbated by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

25. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against all women and girls, which is rooted in historical and structural inequality and unequal power relations between men and women. It reiterates that violence against women and girls

in all its forms and manifestations in public and private spheres, including sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, are pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, particularly at the community level. It expresses deep concern that women and girls in rural and remote areas may be particularly vulnerable to violence because of multidimensional poverty, limited or a lack of access to justice, to effective legal remedies and services, including protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration, and to health-care services. It re-emphasizes that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and violates and impairs or nullifies their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

26. The Commission recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of violence and a violation and abuse of human rights and impedes the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas.

27. The Commission also recognizes the contribution of rural families to sustainable development and that the sharing of family responsibilities creates an enabling family environment for the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas, and that women and men make a significant contribution to the welfare of their families and communities.

28. The Commission acknowledges the benefit of implementing family-oriented policies aimed at, inter alia, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the full participation of women in society, work-family balance and the self-sufficiency of the family unit and recognizes the need to ensure that all social and economic development policies are responsive to the changing needs and expectations of rural families in fulfilling their numerous functions and that the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of all family members are respected.

29. The Commission recognizes that rural women and girls undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and that such uneven distribution of responsibilities is a significant constraint on women's and girls' completion of, or progress in, education and training, on women's entry and re-entry and advancement in the paid labour market and on their economic opportunities and entrepreneurial activities, and can result in gaps in social protection, pay and pensions. It also recognizes that addressing attitudes and social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys at the household and community levels creates an enabling environment for the social and economic empowerment of all rural women and girls. The Commission stresses the need to recognize and adopt measures to reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household and by prioritizing, inter alia, infrastructure development, social protection policies and accessible, affordable and quality social services, including care services, childcare, maternity, paternity or parental leave.

30. The Commission expresses its deep concern about slow or stagnant economic growth and development, the rising inequalities within and among countries, volatile food and energy prices, continuing food and energy insecurity, the remaining effects of the world financial and economic crises, water scarcity, epidemics, demographic changes, unplanned and rapid urbanization of populations, the insufficient investment in development in rural areas, unsustainable fisheries practices and use of marine resources, natural hazards, natural disasters and environmental degradation, and the increasing challenges caused by humanitarian emergencies, displacement, armed conflicts and the adverse impacts of climate change, all of which are exacerbating

disadvantages, vulnerabilities and inequalities that rural women and men, girls and boys and their families face.

31. The Commission recognizes that globalization presents both challenges and opportunities for women's economic empowerment, including rural women. It also recognizes that there is a need to make broad and sustained efforts to ensure that globalization is fully inclusive and equitable for all, including rural women and girls, and becomes an increasingly positive force for women's economic empowerment.

32. The Commission notes with great concern that millions of people, including women and girls living in rural areas, are facing famine or the immediate risk of famine or are experiencing severe food insecurity in several regions of the world, and noting that armed conflicts, drought, poverty and the volatility of commodity prices are among the factors causing or exacerbating famine and severe food insecurity and that additional efforts, including international support, are urgently needed to address this, including in response to urgent United Nations humanitarian appeals for emergency aid and urgent funding.

33. The Commission is deeply concerned that climate change poses challenges for poverty eradication and the achievement of sustainable development, and that owing to gender inequalities, rural women and girls, especially in developing countries, including small island developing States, are often disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, extreme weather events and natural disasters and other environmental issues, including land degradation, desertification, deforestation, sand and dust storms, persistent drought, sea level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification. It recalls the Paris Agreement and that the parties thereto acknowledged that they should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider gender equality, the empowerment of women and intergenerational equity and, in this context, also recalls the adoption of a gender action plan by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-third session.[20] It acknowledges the necessity for every person, including women and girls in rural areas, of present and future generations to have access to an environment adequate to their health, well-being and the critical importance of ensuring such access for the empowerment of rural women and girls and the sustainable development and resilience of rural communities.

34. The Commission recognizes the impact of armed conflict on rural women and girls and the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and in peacebuilding and, in this regard, stresses the importance of the full, effective and meaningful participation of women, including by increasing their role in peace processes, as well as in decision-making in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and reiterates the importance of engaging men and boys as partners in promoting such participation.

35. The Commission also stresses the importance of strengthening the voice, agency, participation and leadership of rural women and girls, and the full, equal and effective participation of women at all levels of decision-making. It recognizes the critical role played by rural women's civil society organizations, trade unions, enterprises and cooperatives in gathering, uniting and supporting rural women in all spheres.

36. The Commission recognizes that indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas, regardless of age, often face violence and higher rates of poverty, limited access to health-care services, information and communications technology, infrastructure, financial services, education and employment, while also recognizing

[20] FCCC/CP/2017/11/Add.1, decision 3/CP.23.

their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including their contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

37. The Commission expresses its concern at the fact that women and girls with disabilities, particularly those living in rural and remote areas, experience stigmatization and an increased risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual violence and abuse, compared to those without disabilities, and that they face a lack of accessible and inclusive services in rural areas, limited access to justice and equal recognition before the law, as well as limited opportunities for productive employment and decent work, for participation in political and public life, for living independently and for inclusion in their communities, and limited freedom to make their own choices.

38. The Commission recognizes the important contribution of rural women and girls of African descent to the development of societies and the promotion of mutual understanding and multiculturalism, bearing in mind the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024).[21]

39. The Commission also recognizes that the positive contribution of rural women migrants has the potential to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development in their countries of origin, transit and destination, underlines the value and dignity of their labour, in all sectors, including in care and domestic work, and encourages efforts to improve public perceptions of migrants and migration and recalls the need to address the special situation and vulnerability of rural migrant women and girls, particularly those who are employed in the informal economy and in less skilled work.

40. The Commission further recognizes the contributions of older rural women, including widowed women, to households and communities, especially in cases where they are left behind by migrating adults, or as a result of other socioeconomic factors, to assume childcare, household and agricultural responsibilities.

41. The Commission acknowledges the important role of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the relevant contribution of national human rights institutions, where they exist, and the important role of civil society in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, as well as in advancing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

42. The Commission welcomes the major contributions made by civil society, including women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders, girls' and youth-led organizations and trade unions in placing the interests, needs and visions of women and girls, including those living in rural areas, on local, national, regional and international agendas, including the 2030 Agenda. It also recognizes the importance of having an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society in the implementation of measures to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

43. The Commission reaffirms the importance of significantly increasing investments to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including rural women and girls, through, inter alia, the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, the full implementation of official development assistance commitments and combating illicit financial flows, so as to build on progress achieved and strengthen international cooperation,

[21] General Assembly resolution 69/16, annex.

including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation.

44. The Commission recognizes the importance of a conducive external environment in support of national efforts towards the economic empowerment of women, through promoting the control, ownership, management and participation of rural women in all sectors and levels of the economy, which includes the mobilization of adequate financial resources, capacity-building and the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, which in turn would enhance the use of enabling technologies to promote women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

45. The Commission also recognizes the importance of fully engaging men and boys, as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas.

46. The Commission urges governments at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites civil society, inter alia, women's organizations, including rural women's organizations, producer, agricultural and fisheries organizations, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, faith-based organizations, the private sector, national human rights institutions, where they exist, and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable, to take the following actions:

Strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks

(a) Take action to fully implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, so as to improve their lives, livelihoods and well-being;

(b) Consider ratifying or acceding to, as a matter of particular priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, limit the extent of any reservations, formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible to ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Conventions, review their reservations regularly with a view to withdrawing them, withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the relevant Convention and implement the Conventions fully by, inter alia, putting in place effective national legislation and policies;

(c) Design and implement national policies and legal frameworks that promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and create an environment that does not tolerate violations or abuses of their rights, including those involving domestic violence, sexual violence and all other forms of gender-based violence and discrimination;

(d) Enact legislation and undertake reforms to realize the equal rights of women and men, and, where applicable, girls and boys, to access natural resources and economic and productive resources, including access to, use of, ownership of and control over land, property and inheritance rights, including diverse types of land tenure, appropriate new technology and financial services, such as credit, banking and finance, including but not limited to microfinance, as well as equal access to justice and legal assistance in this regard, and ensure women's legal capacity and equal rights with men to conclude contracts;

(e) Enact legislation to promote women's, including rural women's, land registration and land title certification, regardless of their marital status, and address practices and stereotypes that undermine their land rights, including in the context of customary and traditional systems, which often govern land management, administration and transfer in rural areas;

(f) Eliminate all forms of discrimination against all women and girls, including in rural areas, and implement targeted measures to address, inter alia, the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and the marginalization women and girls face, through the development, where needed, and the adoption of laws and comprehensive policy measures, their effective and accelerated implementation and monitoring, and the removal, where they exist, of discriminatory provisions in legal frameworks, including punitive provisions, and setting up legal, policy, administrative and other comprehensive measures, including temporary special measures as appropriate, to ensure women's and girls' equal and effective access to justice and accountability for violations of the human rights of women and girls, and ensure that the provisions of multiple legal systems, where they exist, comply with international human rights obligations;

(g) Eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against rural women and girls in public and private spaces, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against rural women and girls and end impunity, and to provide protection and equal access to appropriate remedies and redress, to comprehensive social, health and legal services for all victims and survivors to support their full recovery and reintegration into society, including by providing access to psychosocial support and rehabilitation, access to affordable housing and employment, and bearing in mind the importance of all women and girls living free from violence, such as sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence, gender-related killings, including femicide, as well as elder abuse, and of addressing the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls through enhanced prevention measures, research and strengthened coordination, monitoring and evaluation, by, inter alia, encouraging awareness-raising activities, including through publicizing the societal and economic costs of violence, and work with local communities;

(h) Eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage, which disproportionately affect women and girls in rural areas and may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, and which continue to persist in all regions of the world despite the increase in national, regional and international efforts, including by empowering all women and girls, working with local communities to combat negative social norms that condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon such practices;

(i) Pursue, by effective means, programmes and strategies for preventing and eliminating sexual harassment against all women and girls, including harassment in the workplace and in schools, and cyberbullying and cyberstalking, including in rural areas, with an emphasis on effective legal, preventive and protective measures for victims of sexual harassment or those who are at risk of sexual harassment;

(j) Integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and evaluation of and follow-up to development policies, plans and programmes, including budget policies, where lacking, ensuring coordination between line ministries, gender policymakers, gender machineries and other relevant government organizations and institutions with gender expertise, and appropriate collaboration with the private sector, non-governmental and civil society organizations and national human rights institutions, where they exist, and paying increased attention to the needs of rural women and girls to ensure that they benefit from policies and

programmes adopted in all spheres and that the disproportionate number of rural women living in poverty is reduced;

(k) Eliminate barriers and afford equal and effective access by all rural woman and girls to justice, legal remedies and legal support by, inter alia, providing adequate law enforcement and public safety infrastructure, accessible and affordable services, increasing the legal literacy of rural women and girls, such as awareness of and information about their legal rights, including on the existence of multiple legal systems, where they exist, providing legal assistance, gender-responsive training for police and security forces, prosecutors, judges and lawyers and other relevant authorities and officials in rural areas, as appropriate, putting in place mechanisms to ensure accountability and judicial remedies, and mainstreaming a gender perspective into justice systems at all levels to ensure the equal protection of the law for rural women and girls, taking into consideration, inter alia, the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (Bangkok Rules);[22]

l. Guarantee the universal registration of births, including in rural areas, and ensure the timely registration of all marriages for individuals living in rural areas including by removing physical, administrative, procedural and any other barriers that impede access to registration and by providing, where lacking, mechanisms for the registration of customary and religious marriages, bearing in mind the vital importance of birth registration for the realization of the rights of individuals;

Implement economic and social policies for the empowerment of all rural women and girls

(m) Design, implement and pursue gender-responsive economic and social policies that aim to, inter alia, eradicate poverty, including in rural areas, and combat the feminization of poverty, ensure the full and equal participation of rural women in the development, implementation and follow-up of development policies and programmes and poverty eradication strategies, support increased rural employment and decent work, and promote the participation of women at all levels and sectors of the rural economy and in diverse on-farm and off-farm economic activities, including sustainable agricultural and fisheries production;

(n) Pursue macroeconomic policies that support diverse economic activities, including smallholder agricultural production and the food security and improved nutrition of all rural women and girls and their communities by fostering the positive impact and mitigating the negative impact of international investment and trade rules;

(o) Emphasize the need for business enterprises, including transnational corporations and others, to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for human rights abuses in the context of their operations, products or services on the well-being of women and girls in rural areas and provide for or cooperate in their remediation;

(p) Design, implement and pursue fiscal policies that promote gender equality and the empowerment of all rural women and girls by, inter alia, facilitating greater access to social protection and financial and business services, including credit, for women in rural areas, in particular women heads of households;

(q) Refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries;

[22] General Assembly resolution 65/229, annex.

(r) Mainstream a gender perspective, and include sustainable agricultural and fisheries development issues, in national agricultural and rural development policies, strategies, plans and programmes, thereby enabling rural women to act and be visible as stakeholders, decision makers and beneficiaries, taking into account the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security[23] and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication;[24]

(s) Strengthen and support the critical role and contributions of rural women, including women farmers and fishers and farm workers, to enhancing sustainable agricultural and rural development, eradicating poverty, achieving food security and improved nutrition and the economic well-being of their families and communities; ensure the equal access of rural women to agricultural technologies that are affordable, durable, sustainable and accessible to women farmers and fishers and farm workers, through investment, the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, and support research and development and integrated and multisectoral policies to improve their productive capacity and incomes, strengthen their resilience, and address the existing gaps in and barriers to trading their products in national, regional and international markets;

(t) Strengthen national, regional and international efforts, as appropriate, to enhance the capacity of developing countries to support rural women farmers, including smallholder farmers, and those in subsistence farming and fisheries, horticulture and livestock to achieve food security and improved nutrition, including through appropriate mechanization in agriculture, sustainable agricultural practices and education and training on vaccination and management techniques and public and private investment to close the gender gap in agriculture and facilitate rural women's access to extension and financial services, agricultural inputs, land, water and irrigation;

(u) Strengthen sustainable production and consumption patterns, including family farming, respecting and protecting traditional and ancestral knowledge and practices of rural women, in particular the preservation, production, use and exchange of endemic and native seeds, and supporting alternatives to the heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides harmful to the health of rural women and girls and their communities;

(v) Invest in and strengthen efforts to empower rural women as important actors in achieving food security and improved nutrition, ensuring that their right to food is met, including by supporting rural women's participation in all areas of economic activity, including commercial and artisan fisheries and aquaculture, promoting decent working conditions and personal safety, facilitating sustainable access to and use of critical rural infrastructure, land, water and natural resources, and local, regional and global markets, and valuing rural women's, including indigenous women's, traditional and ancestral knowledge and contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, for present and future generations;

(w) Ensure integrated food and nutritional support for rural women and girls, including those who are pregnant and breastfeeding, and their access at all times to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food requirements for an active and healthy life;

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[23] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, document CL 144/9 (C 2013/20), appendix D.

[24] Available from www.fao.org/3/a-i4356en.pdf.

(x) Invest in the provision of and access to quality, resilient and gender-responsive infrastructure and time- and labour-saving technologies, information and communications technology, safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy and safe drinking water and sanitation for all, including through technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, to improve the lives, livelihoods and well-being of all rural women and girls;

(y) Promote the leadership of women and their full, effective and equal participation in decision-making on water and sanitation and household energy management to ensure that a gender-based approach is adopted in relation to water and sanitation and energy programmes, through, inter alia, measures to reduce the time spent by women and girls on collecting household water and fuel, and to address the negative impact of inadequate water and sanitation and energy services on the access of girls to education, and to protect women and girls from being physically threatened or assaulted and from sexual violence while collecting household water and fuel and when accessing sanitation facilities outside of their home or practising open defecation;

(z) Commit to encourage urban-rural interactions and connectivity and eliminate geographic and territorial disparities by strengthening gender-responsive sustainable and affordable transport and mobility, technology and communication networks and infrastructure, underpinned by planning instruments with a gender perspective, based on an integrated urban and territorial approach that maximizes the potential of those sectors for enhanced productivity, social, economic and territorial cohesion, as well as safety and environmental sustainability;

(aa) Optimize fiscal expenditures to extend social protection coverage to all rural women and girls and establish nationally appropriate social protection floors to ensure access to social protection, without discrimination of any kind, and take measures to ensure sustainable, long-term financial support for social protection systems and make information on social protection measures and benefits widely available and accessible to all rural women and girls, bearing in mind that social protection policies play a critical role in reducing poverty and inequality and supporting inclusive growth and contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas;

(bb) Protect and promote the right to work and rights at work of all rural women in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment, taking into consideration international labour standards and national labour laws, including by setting wages that allow for an adequate standard of living, implementing policies and enforcing regulations that promote decent work and uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and taking measures to address gender-based discrimination, occupational segregation, the gender pay gap and unsafe and unhealthy working conditions;

(cc) Promote the economic empowerment of rural women and the transition of rural women from the informal to the formal economy by improving their skills, productivity and employment opportunities, including through technical, agricultural, fisheries and vocational training, including in financial and digital literacy, and facilitate the entry and re-entry of all rural women, especially young women, into the labour force;

(dd) Encourage and facilitate rural women's entrepreneurship and expand opportunities for their enterprises, cooperatives and self-help groups to diversify and increase their productivity by engaging in sustainable agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, including mariculture, cultural and creative industries and other areas of economic activity, and improving their access to financing and investment, technology and infrastructure, training and diverse markets;

(ee) Increase trade and procurement from rural women's enterprises, cooperatives and women-owned businesses by building the capacities and skills of rural women, especially young women, to benefit from public and private sector procurement processes, including public food programmes, and fostering their access to local, national and international value chains and markets;

(ff) Take measures to facilitate the financial inclusion and financial literacy of rural women and their equal access to formal financial services, including timely and affordable credit, loans, savings, insurance, and remittance transfer schemes, integrate a gender perspective into finance sector policy and regulations, in accordance with national priorities and legislation, encourage financial institutions, such as commercial banks, development banks, agricultural banks, microfinance institutions, mobile network operators, agent networks, cooperatives, postal banks and savings banks, to provide access to financial products, services and information to rural women, and encourage the use of innovative tools and platforms, including online and mobile banking;

(gg) Recognize, reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work of rural women and girls, as well as their contributions to on-farm and off-farm production, by promoting policies and initiatives that support the reconciliation of work and family life and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, through flexibility in working arrangements without reductions in labour and social protections, and through the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy, transport and information and communications technology, as well as accessible, affordable and quality childcare and care facilities for children and other dependents and maternity, paternity or parental leave, and by challenging gender stereotypes and negative social norms and facilitating men's increased participation in unpaid care and domestic work and family responsibilities, including as fathers and caregivers;

(hh) Take steps to measure the value of unpaid care and domestic work in order to determine its contribution to the national economy, for example through periodic time-use surveys, and to include such measurements in statistics as well as in the formulation of gender-responsive economic and social policies;

(ii) Invest in and strengthen family-oriented policies and programmes in rural areas that provide the necessary support and protection and are responsive to the diverse, specific and changing needs of rural women and girls and their families, as well as address the imbalances, risks and barriers that they face in enjoying their rights and protect all family members against any form of violence, as those policies and programmes are important tools for, inter alia, fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequality, promoting work-family balance and gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity;

(jj) Promote and respect women's and girls' right to education at all levels, throughout their life cycle, including women and girls living in rural areas and those who have been left furthest behind, by providing universal access to quality education, and to free and compulsory primary and secondary education, ensuring inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy, and striving to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary and secondary education and expanding vocational and technical education for rural women and girls, and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all;

(kk) Eliminate gender disparities and commit to scaling up financing and investments in public education systems to fulfil the right to education for women

and girls in rural areas by addressing gender-based discrimination, negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems, including in curricula, textbooks and teaching methodologies; to combating gender norms that devalue girls' education and prevent women and girls from accessing education; provide inclusive, safe, non-violent and accessible schools with gender- and disability-sensitive infrastructure, including lighting, and safe, accessible and affordable transportation to school; to maintain separate and adequate sanitation facilities; to train, recruit and retain qualified teachers in rural areas, especially women teachers where they are underrepresented; to support rural women and girls with disabilities at all levels of education and training; to ensure that rural women and girls have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and to promote an effective transition from education or unemployment to decent work and active participation in public life;

(ll) Take steps to promote educational and health practices in order to foster a culture in which menstruation is recognized as healthy and natural and in which girls are not stigmatized on this basis, recognizing that girls' attendance at school can be affected by negative perceptions of menstruation and the lack of means to maintain safe personal hygiene, such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools that meet the needs of girls;

(mm) Ensure that pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, can continue and complete their education, and in this regard, design, implement and, where applicable, revise educational policies to allow them to remain in and return to school, providing them with access to health care and social services and support, including childcare and breastfeeding facilities and creches, and to education programmes with accessible locations, flexible schedules and distance education, including e-learning, bearing in mind the important role and responsibilities of, and challenges faced by, fathers, including young fathers, in this regard;

(nn) Intensify efforts to prevent and eliminate violence and sexual harassment against girls at, and on the way to, school by, inter alia, implementing effective violence prevention and response activities in schools and communities, engaging men and boys, educating children from a young age regarding the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect, and designing educational programmes and teaching materials that support gender equality, respectful relationships and non-violent behaviour;

(oo) Develop policies and programmes with the support, where appropriate, of international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, giving priority to formal, informal and non-formal education programmes, including scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive education that is relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the best interests of the child as their basic concern, information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and foster informed decision-making, communication and risk-reduction skills and to develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to, inter alia, enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection and other risks;

(pp) Address the digital divide, which disproportionately affects rural women and girls, by facilitating their access to information and communications technology and science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in order to promote

their empowerment and to develop the skills, information and knowledge that are needed to support their labour market entry, livelihoods, well-being and resilience and expand the scope of information and communications technology-enabled mobile learning and literacy training while promoting a safe and secure cyberspace for women and girls;

(qq) Strengthen measures, including resource generation, to improve women's health, including maternal health, by addressing the specific health, nutrition and basic needs of rural women and taking concrete measures to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health for women of all ages in rural areas, as well as quality, affordable, available and universally accessible primary health care and support services;

(rr) Increase financial investments in quality, affordable and accessible health-care systems and facilities and safe, effective, quality, essential and affordable medicines and vaccines for all, as well as health technologies, including through community outreach and private sector engagement, and with the support of the international community, towards achieving each country's path towards universal health coverage for all rural women and girls;

(ss) Increase investments in a more effective and socially accountable health workforce and address the shortage and inequitable distribution of doctors, surgeons, midwives, nurses and other health-care workers in rural areas, by promoting decent work with adequate remuneration and incentives to secure the presence in rural and remote areas of qualified health-care professionals, enabling safe working environments and conditions, and expanding rural and community-based health education and training and strengthening education for health professionals;

(tt) Take measures to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, as well as neonatal, infant and child mortality and morbidity, in rural areas and increase access to quality health care before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth to all rural women and girls through interventions such as training and equipping community health workers, nurses and midwives, to provide basic prenatal and postnatal care and emergency obstetric care, inter alia, by providing voluntary, informed family planning and empowering women and communities to identify risk factors and complications of pregnancy and childbirth and facilitate access to health facilities;

(uu) Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes, and recognizing that the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on all matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, as a contribution to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and the realization of their human rights;

(vv) Intensify national and international efforts to improve public health, strengthen health-care systems and increase the availability of motivated, well-trained and appropriately equipped health professionals and health workers, as well as access to health facilities, including access to diagnosis services, and for the prevention, treatment and care of non-communicable and communicable diseases, as well as neglected tropical diseases, by integrating gender-based approaches for the prevention and control of diseases on the basis of data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics relevant in national contexts;

(ww) Strengthen efforts to achieve universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support for all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV and AIDS, including co-infections and other sexually transmitted infections, and address their specific needs and concerns without stigma or discrimination, and promote the active and meaningful participation, contribution and leadership in HIV and AIDS responses of women and girls living with HIV and AIDS in rural and remote areas;

(xx) Devise, strengthen and implement comprehensive anti-trafficking strategies that integrate a human rights and sustainable development perspective, and enforce, as appropriate, legal frameworks, in a gender- and age-sensitive manner, to combat and eliminate all forms of trafficking in persons, raise public awareness of the issue of trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, take measures to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to modern slavery and sexual exploitation, provide access, as applicable, to protection and reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking in persons and enhance international cooperation, inter alia, to counter, with a view to eliminating, the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation and forced labour;

(yy) Strengthen and build the resilience and adaptive capacity of all rural women and girls to respond to and recover from economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters, humanitarian emergencies and the adverse impacts of climate change, natural disasters and extreme weather events by providing essential infrastructure, services, appropriate financing, technology, and social protection, humanitarian relief, forecast and early warning systems, and decent work for women;

(zz) Develop and adopt gender-responsive strategies on mitigation and adaptation to climate change to support the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change, through, inter alia, the promotion of their health and well-being, as well as access to sustainable livelihoods, and the provision of adequate resources to ensure women's full participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies and policies related to the adverse impacts of climate change, and by ensuring the integration of the specific needs of women and girls into humanitarian responses to natural disasters, into the planning, delivery and monitoring of disaster risk reduction policies and into sustainable natural resources management;

(aaa) Promote and protect the rights of indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education, health care, public services, economic resources, including land and natural resources, and women's access to decent work, and promoting their meaningful participation in the economy and in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge, and noting the importance for indigenous women and girls of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[25];

(bbb) Promote and protect the rights of older women in rural areas by ensuring their equal access to social, legal and financial services, infrastructure, health care, social protection, and economic resources and their full and equal participation in decision-making;

(ccc) Promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including by ensuring access, on an equal basis with others, to economic and financial resources

[25] General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.

and disability-inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, transportation, justice mechanisms and services, in particular in relation to health and education and productive employment and decent work for women with disabilities, as well as by ensuring that the priorities and rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, and that they are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes;

(ddd) Promote and protect the rights of Afrodescendent rural women and girls, including, where applicable the recognition of their lands and territories, and mainstream a gender perspective when designing and monitoring public policies, taking into account the specific needs and realities of rural women and girls of African descent;

(eee) Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant government institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, and gender statistics, to support policies and actions to improve the situation of rural women and girls, and to monitor and track the implementation of such policies and actions, and enhance partnerships and the mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance to enable developing countries to systematically design, collect and ensure access to high-quality, reliable and timely disaggregated data and gender statistics;

(fff) Promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by reaffirming the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, pursuing policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors and reinvigorating the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development;

(ggg) Take steps to significantly increase investment to close resource gaps, for example through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including public, private, domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, including by enhancing revenue administration through modernized, progressive tax systems, improved tax policy, more efficient tax collection and increased priority on gender equality and the empowerment of women in official development assistance (ODA) to build on progress achieved, and to ensure that ODA is used effectively to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls;

(hhh) Urge developed countries to fully implement their respective official development assistance commitments, including the commitment made by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national income for ODA to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income for ODA to the least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build on the progress achieved in ensuring that ODA is used effectively to help meet development goals and targets and help them, inter alia, to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls;

(iii) Strengthen international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation, and invite all States to enhance South-South and triangular cooperation focusing on shared development priorities, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in government, civil society and the private sector, while noting that national ownership and leadership in this regard are indispensable for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls;

Strengthen the collective voice, leadership and decision-making of all rural women and girls

(jjj) Ensure that the perspectives of all rural women and girls are taken into account, and that women, and girls as appropriate, fully and equally participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience, and that women and their organizations, and girl- and youth-led organizations, are fully, safely and actively able to participate in the decision-making process, policies and institutions at all levels, including by promoting and protecting the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, the right to vote and to be elected as provided by law, as well as to participate in local and self-governing bodies such as community and village councils, and in political parties and other organizations;

(kkk)Mainstream a gender perspective in decision-making processes and the management of natural resources in, inter alia, land, forestry, fisheries, marine and water management bodies, as well as in planning relating to rural infrastructure and services, transportation and energy, leveraging the participation and influence of women in managing the sustainable use of natural resources;

(lll) Protect and promote the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and collective bargaining so as to enable rural women workers and entrepreneurs to organize and join unions, cooperatives and business associations, while recognizing that those legal entities are created, modified and dissolved in accordance with national law and taking into account each State's international legal obligations;

(mmm) Ensure that the perspectives of rural women, and girls as appropriate, are taken into account in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in humanitarian emergencies and that they effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as take into account the perspective of women and girls who are internally displaced and who are refugees; and ensure that the human rights of all rural women and girls are fully respected and protected in all response, recovery and reconstruction strategies and that appropriate measures are taken to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against rural women and girls in this regard;

(nnn)Ensure that women affected by natural disasters, including those caused by the adverse impacts of climate change, are empowered to effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in leadership and decision-making processes in this regard;

(ooo)Support the effective participation, decision-making and leadership of rural women in enterprises, farmer and fisher organizations, producer cooperatives, trade unions, civil society and other relevant organizations in ensuring a safe and enabling environment, and provide support for those organizations, including by investing in programmes that provide opportunities for rural women and girls to exercise their voice, agency and leadership;

(ppp)Develop and implement policies and strategies that promote rural women's and girls' participation in and access to media and information and communications technology, including by increasing their digital literacy and access to information;

(qqq)Recognize the important role the media can play in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls, including through

non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive coverage and by eliminating gender stereotypes, including those perpetuated by commercial advertisements, and encourage training for those who work in the media and the development and strengthening of self-regulatory mechanisms to promote balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls, which contribute to the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of discrimination against and exploitation of women and girls;

(rrr) Support the important role of civil society actors in promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of rural women; take steps to protect such actors, including women human rights defenders, and to integrate a gender perspective into creating a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights and to prevent violations and abuses against them in rural areas, inter alia, threats, harassment and violence, in particular on issues relating to labour rights, the environment, land and natural resources; and combat impunity by taking steps to ensure that violations or abuses are promptly and impartially investigated and that those responsible are held accountable;

(sss) Fully engage men and boys to take an active part in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas, and in the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, in both public and private spheres; design and implement national policies and programmes that address the role and responsibility of men and boys and aim to ensure the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in caregiving and domestic work; transform, with the aim of eliminating, social norms that condone violence against women and girls, and attitudes and social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys, including by understanding and addressing such root causes of gender inequality as unequal power relations, social norms, practices and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls; and engage men and boys in efforts to promote and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls for the benefit of women and men, girls and boys.

47. The Commission recognizes its primary role for the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in which its work is grounded, and stresses that it is critical to address and integrate gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to ensure synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

48. The Commission calls upon Governments to strengthen, as appropriate, the authority and capacity of national mechanisms for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, at all levels, which should be placed at the highest possible level of government, with sufficient funding, and to mainstream a gender perspective across all relevant national and local institutions, including labour, economic and financial government agencies, in order to ensure that national planning, decision-making, policy formulation and implementation, budgeting processes and institutional structures contribute to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including in rural areas.

49. The Commission calls upon the United Nations system entities, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme, within their respective mandates, and relevant international financial institutions and multi-stakeholder platforms to support Member States, upon their request, in their efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all rural women and girls.

50. The Commission encourages the international community to enhance international cooperation and to devote resources to developing rural areas and sustainable agriculture and fisheries and to supporting smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, herders and fishers in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries.

51. The Commission recalls General Assembly resolution 72/181 of 19 December 2017 and encourages the secretariat to continue its consideration of how to enhance the participation, including at the sixty-third session of the Commission, of national human rights institutions that are fully compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles)[7], where they exist, in compliance with the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

52. The Commission calls upon the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and in supporting Governments and national women's machineries, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector, employers' organizations and trade unions and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

[7] General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex.